Summary of Options Available for Students to Earn College Credit in Wisconsin High Schools

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INTRODUCTION

It is the State Superintendent's goal that all students in Wisconsin, regardless of where they live, should have the opportunity to earn some postsecondary credentials while still in high school. The results will be multifold: young people succeeding in college-level courses during high school and graduating high school college and career ready; increasing the number of students who go on to enroll and succeed in higher education; and reducing the total time to degree – saving students and families money.

High school students can currently earn college credit in a variety of ways in Wisconsin, including Advanced Placement exams, International Baccalaureate programs, Youth Options, College Credit in High Schools programs through the University of Wisconsin System (UW System), and transcripted credit through the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

While the options are many, they are not equally available across the state and present different challenges and barriers to students who would seek to take advantage of them. This paper presents a summary of the options currently available.

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS AVAILABLE

I. EXAMINATION PROGRAMS TO EARN COLLEGE CREDIT

School districts throughout Wisconsin offer opportunities for students to take certain exams to earn college credit. There are three predominant programs in this area: Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and the College Level Exam Program. Availability of the programs varies by school district, and individual colleges and universities recognize the exam score and credits earned differently. However, these are strong, lower cost options for students to demonstrate content knowledge and get an early edge on college credit.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Advanced Placement (AP) is a high school academic program with courses in more than 30 subjects that culminate with college-level assessments. Exams are graded on a scale of one to five, with a score of three or higher considered successful and eligible for credit or advanced standing at most colleges and universities. According to the College Board, earning a score of three or higher on an AP exam is a good predictor of a student's ability to succeed in college academic studies and graduate.

In 2011, Wisconsin was 14th in the nation for the percentage of seniors who successfully completed an AP exam while in high school. With 18.3 percent of state graduates scoring a three or higher on an exam, Wisconsin also has the highest success percentage among the 13-state Midwest region. The national passing rate, scores of three or higher on the five-point scale, was 16.9 percent. Wisconsin had 16,691 seniors who took an AP exam while in high school and 11,618 (69.6 percent) who scored a three or higher on an AP exam. Participation showed a one-year increase of 3.7 percent and a jump of 24.3 percent over five years. AP test-takers represent 26.3 percent of Wisconsin's 2010 graduates. Nationally 853,314 seniors, 28.3 percent of the nation's graduates, took an AP exam while in high school. 1

The availability of AP courses varies from district to district. However, through a partnership between the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Cooperative Education Service Agency 9, the Wisconsin Web Academy offers 20 AP courses to students throughout the state. During fall 2010, 192 students from 44 school districts took AP coursework via the Wisconsin Web Academy. Any public, private, or charter school student can access these AP courses through their local schools.

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¹ College Board, Seventh Annual Advanced Placement Report to the Nation, 2011

In addition, while the AP coursework provides strong preparation for the AP exam and an introduction to college-level work, it is worth noting that students do not need to take a formal AP course to take the AP exam in a subject area. Under Wisconsin law, school districts are required to pay the costs of AP exams taken by pupils enrolled in the school district who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch.² The cost of AP exams is \$87 per exam in 2011.

International Baccalaureate Program

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is a comprehensive curriculum allowing its graduates to fulfill requirements of various international systems of education. The advanced level at which subjects are taught is geared to motivate academically talented students toward greater achievement.

Students who have taken IB courses may choose to take IB exams. These exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 representing the highest performance. Similar to AP, Wisconsin universities acknowledge the achievements of students who have successfully completed IB exams by awarding credit for specific scores. Unlike AP exams, Wisconsin state law does not require school districts to fund the cost of IB exams for low income pupils.

The IB program is not widespread in Wisconsin. There are currently 13 IB World Schools in Wisconsin implementing 13 IB programs, the oldest being at Racine Case High School, Milwaukee Rufus King High School, and Wausau East High School.³

COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM

The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), established by the College Board, allows students who have gained knowledge through independent study, advanced high school courses, noncredit adult courses, or professional development to take examinations for possible college credit. Depending on a college's CLEP policy, a satisfactory score on each CLEP exam can earn students up to 12 credits.

The College Board offers 33 CLEP exams reflective of courses typically offered in a student's first two years of college. A CLEP exam costs \$77, making it an affordable option for high school students looking to accelerate their work. Unlike AP exams, Wisconsin law does not require school districts to fund the cost of CLEP exams for low income students.

² Section 120.12(22), Wisconsin Statutes

³ International Baccalaureate Organization

⁴ http://clep.collegeboard.org

The University of Wisconsin grants advanced credit for the successful completion of college-level course work while in high school and for high achievement for each of the three above programs.⁵

II. ADVANCED STANDING, RETROACTIVE CREDIT, AND CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Wisconsin high school students may take high school courses for which advanced standing or retroactive credit is available upon enrollment at a post secondary school. For example, advanced standing agreements have been developed between technical colleges and school districts when a high school course or courses contain competencies that are recognized as equivalent to those in a technical college course. The technical college credit awarded for this high school coursework is not only available at the technical college with which the high school has the articulation agreement, but also must be accepted as credit for any comparable course at any other technical college to which a student applies.⁶

The WTCS has also established a formal policy regarding "Credit for Prior Learning." According to the policy, a student enrolled in a technical college may obtain credit for prior learning in six different categories, including "previous work experience, education or training, or other prior learning demonstrated as comparable in content and rigor to a specific technical college course or courses."

The UW System has established policies regarding advanced standing, as well. For example, high school students who complete Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses from an approved list and achieve a 70% or higher on the national PLTW college credit end-of-course exam will receive up to a maximum of six elective credits at all UW System Institutions. Each UW institution will further determine whether course equivalent credit or credit in the major should be granted and the appropriate score required to grant credit for those purposes.⁸

Most colleges and universities offer retroactive credit for foreign languages taken by students while in high school, if a student takes the next level course at the college level and earns a satisfactory grade, as determined by the institution.

⁵ http://www.admissions.wisc.edu/APIB.php

^{6 &}quot;Ways in Which High School Students Can Earn Technical College Credit Through Articulation", WTCS, May 2009

⁷ Credit for Prior Learning Policy, WTCS, November 2010.

⁸ Regent Policy 4-17: Advanced Standing Credit for PLTW Courses, Adopted 12/2009

III. DUAL CREDIT/DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS

Dual credit or dual enrollment programs allow students to earn high school and college credit simultaneously for the same course. Wisconsin offers several different dual enrollment options, including Youth Options (for nearly all colleges and universities in Wisconsin), Transcripted Credit through the WTCS, and College Credit in High School programs through the UW System.

YOUTH OPTIONS

The Youth Options program allows public high school juniors and seniors who are in good academic standing to take courses through the WTCS, the UW System, and participating private, non-profit, and tribally-controlled colleges in Wisconsin. Students seeking to take Youth Options courses must apply to the school district and then to the college. If the student's school board approves and the student is accepted at the college/university, the student's school board must pay the cost of the student's attendance (tuition, fees, and books), not to exceed 18 postsecondary credits per pupil. In 2009-10, approximately 3,600 students enrolled in Youth Options courses, or about 2.5% of all 11th and 12th graders in the state.

Youth Options offers an important avenue for academically motivated students to gain access to college-level coursework not available in their high schools, and serves as a means to provide additional academic preparation for success in college by exposing students to the rigors of a college level course. Students earn college credit and high school credit simultaneously, reducing the total time and cost to degree.

By definition, the majority of Youth Options courses are offered on college campuses, and are not available to students at their high school campuses. A college can deny the student's participation based on the student's academic qualifications or a lack of available space. A school board can deny the student's participation if there is a comparable course available in the school district, if the course does not satisfy a high school graduation requirement, and can determine the amount of credits to provide for the course, if any.

Moreover, since Youth Options-eligible courses are predominantly offered on the college campus, the burden is placed on students to travel to the college campus to receive the credit, as opposed to those courses offered directly on-site at the high school through other dual credit

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⁹ Established under section 118.55, Wisconsin Statutes.

¹⁰ Under section 118.55(3)(b), when a pupil applies to his/her school board to take a college-level course under the Youth Options program, the school board must determine whether the course is comparable to a course offered in the school district, whether the course satisfies high school graduation requirements, and the number of high school credits to award the pupil for the course, if any. If the pupil disagrees with the school board's findings, the pupil can appeal to the State Superintendent.

¹¹ Career and Technical Educational Enrollment Reporting System (CTEERS) reporting required by Carl Perkins funded school districts.

programs. Some state financial assistance for transportation costs is available for low-income students.

There are options available to address transportation barriers. For example, a course offered by a postsecondary institution via two-way interactive instructional television, correspondence, or the Internet qualifies as a Youth Options course. As long as the course is offered by a Wisconsin post-secondary institution, a student may take the course as a correspondence course, a web-based course, through virtual or on-line programming, or by video conferencing. Likewise, a school district may meet the comparable course provisions by offering a two-way interactive instructional television or internet course consistent with the district's policy.

COLLEGE CREDIT IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

The UW System has established by policy the ability for college credit courses to be offered in Wisconsin high schools by university-approved high school faculty. ¹² The policy provides direction to UW System campuses around courses, instruction, students, tuition, and more.

For example:

- Courses offered for college credit in high school must meet the same standards for instruction, content, student work, and evaluation that exist for on-campus degree programs.
- **High school faculty must have at least a Master's degree in the discipline** in which the course is offered and the specific approval of the university academic department.
- Students must pay for courses, albeit at a discounted rate. School districts will have the option to bill the UW System institutions for costs they have incurred for providing the instruction for these courses, or UW System institutions may reimburse the local school districts the lesser of the actual costs or 50% of the tuition collected.
- Credits received are subject to the UW System's Undergraduate Transfer Policy. 13

Currently, two UW System campuses offer College Credit in High School programs: the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh¹⁴ and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.¹⁵ Both programs are accredited through the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP), a professional organization for high schools and colleges that fosters and supports rigorous concurrent enrollment.¹⁶

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^{12 &}quot;College Credit in High Schools" (G36), July 13, 1998

¹³ UW System Undergraduate Transfer Policy

¹⁴ UW-Oshkosh Cooperative Academic Preparation Program

¹⁵ UW-Green Bay College Credit in High School Program

¹⁶ http://nacep.org/

UW-Green Bay is currently partnering with several area public and private high schools to offer college level coursework to students on their high school campuses. ¹⁷ Courses currently offered through UW-Green Bay include: Business and Its Environment, College Writing, Expository Writing, Fundamentals of Public Address, Introduction to American Literature I&II, Introduction to Film, Introduction to Literature, Principles of Chemistry I. Students taking a course through UW-Green Bay's College Credit in High School program pay one half the per credit tuition rate and do not pay segregated fees.

UW-Oshkosh's program, entitled the Cooperative Academic Partnership Program (CAPP), is more extensive than the program at UW-Green Bay. The course offerings available through CAPP are broader, including over 40 courses in sciences, English, languages, history, mathematics, music, art, and more. In addition, the UW-Oshkosh program reaches high schools beyond the Fox Valley, including high schools in Brookfield, Greendale, Middleton, Sun Prairie and South Milwaukee, for example. ¹⁸ CAPP students pay one-half the per-credit tuition rate.

Students enrolled in these courses may receive both high school and college credit, providing that they pay for the cost of the college credit. If they do not pay the tuition for the college credits, students can enroll in the course, but will only receive high school credits for the course. Students cannot use Youth Options to pay for the cost of the college credits because, by definition, CAPP courses are offered at the high school and Youth Options only pays for credits earned at a college and are not available via the high school course catalogue.

TRANSCRIPTED CREDIT

Wisconsin high school students can earn technical college credit through transcripted credit, under which both the high school and the respective technical college provide students credit for the same course. The course is taught either by a WTCS certified technical college instructor or a high school instructor who holds a current DPI license in a related field and has been granted

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¹⁷ Schools participating in one or more UW-GB course include: Denmark High School, Bonduel High School, Clintonville High School, De Pere High School, Green Bay West High School, Oconto Falls High School, Seymour, High School, Shawano Community High School, Sturgeon Bay High School, Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School, Wrightstown Community High School, N.E.W. Lutheran High School, and Lake Country Lutheran High School

¹⁸ Schools participating in the CAPP program include: Berlin High School, Brillion High School, Brookfield Central High School, Brookfield East High School, Burlington High School, Campbellsport High School, Elkhorn Area High School, Fox Valley Lutheran High School, Freedom High School, Greendale High School, Horace Mann High School, Hortonville High School, Kaukauna High School, Kimberly High School, Little Chute High School, Little Wolf High School, Lourdes High School, Menasha High School, Menomonee Falls High School, Middleton High School, Neenah High School, Omro High School, Oshkosh North High School, Oshkosh West High School, Plymouth High School, Ripon High School, Seymour High School, Sheboygan North High School, South Milwaukee High School, St. Mary Central High School, Sun Prairie High School, Valley Christian High School, Watertown High School, Waupaca High School, Winneconne High School, and Xavier High School.

WTCS articulation certification.¹⁹ Upon successful completion of the course, grades are posted to an official technical college transcript, and credit is earned at the technical college and high school level simultaneously.

Unlike the UW System College Credit in High School Program, transcripted credit allows students to earn postsecondary credits for courses taught at the high school level **tuition-free**. Transcripted credit involves a written contractual agreement between the individual technical college and the school district involved, which must include a cost-neutral arrangement for the school districts and technical colleges involved, and stipulates that students are not charged for the course. All courses taken for technical college credit appear on a student's transcript, and are transferrable to other technical colleges who have the same program.²⁰

The Rural Schools Training and Instruction Consortium (RUSTIC) Initiative, is an example of transcripted programming that impacts five rural Wisconsin school districts. Through this one-year program, high school seniors are permitted to take courses through Northcentral Technical College in the areas of manufacturing, marketing, and child care. Students receive dual credit from their high school and the technical college along with an industry-recognized certificate. Once they graduate from high school, students can enter the workforce or pursue further postsecondary studies at the technical college or a four-year institution. Because the participating rural schools do not have the means to operate these programs individually, the collaboration needed to overcome scheduling conflicts, create a financial support model, and provide teachers, shows the possibilities available for students through cooperation. In recognition of this innovative model, DPI recently awarded the RUSTIC Initiative the State Superintendent's "Standing Up for Rural Wisconsin Schools, Libraries, and Communities" award.

In a 2007-08 report focusing on 12 of Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges, the WTCS reported nearly 8,000 Wisconsin high school students taking nearly 11,000 transcripted tech prep and youth apprenticeship courses, for a total of almost 27,000 credits in that year. This count did not include students and courses offered through the Madison Area Technical College, Gateway Technical College, Blackhawk Technical College, and Southwest Technical College. As a result, the actual number of students, courses, and credits statewide through transcripted credit in 2007-08 is undoubtedly significantly higher.

¹⁹ Per Wisconsin Administrative Code TCS 3.03(9)(b)

²⁰ "Ways in Which High School Students Can Earn Technical College Credit Through Articulation", WTCS, May 2009

²¹ Participating in RUSTIC are Abbotsford, Colby, Loyal, Spencer, and Stratford school districts.

²² "Clients Earning Transcripted Tech Prep and Youth Apprenticeship Credit," WTCS Client Reporting System, 2/17/09

IV. WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS

Work-based learning (WBL) programs provide students with opportunities to relate classroom learning to actual business and industry worksites by providing for practice and connection of academic skills to employability skills and technical/professional skills in a chosen occupational career cluster. Students who complete WBLs have a more realistic picture of the requirements of employers, the expectations for professionalism and careers, and the advantage of recognizing the value of life-long learning, training, and educational experiences. Students also may have the opportunity to earn college credit for the coursework taken as a part of the individual WBL program.

YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

Youth Apprenticeship (YA)²³ is a WBL program managed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) that prepares secondary students for work or post secondary education by giving them a combination of classroom instruction and paid on-the-job training. In this education model, secondary students obtain a set of state-wide defined occupational abilities by learning concepts in the classroom and applications in a work setting.

Some features of YA include:

- 36 YA Consortiums feed into 16 technical college districts;
- Each YA program's performance competencies are standardized statewide and practiced, performed, and evaluated at the worksite;
- Each YA program has several options for student experiences. For example, Health YAs can do Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Tech or Health Information Management in one year segments;
- The DWD YA program does not require specific classes and courses for students to take.
 Each YA Consortium determines the required classes/courses needed and available for YA programs offered;
- State-aligned technical college courses are recommended by DWD for YA learning if applicable and available;
- YA programs consist of 2, possibly 3, components to articulate; Coursework, Work Experiences, and Industry Certification;
- Technical College credit articulation is locally determined.

DPI, in conjunction with a team of YA Consortium Coordinators, WTCS, and DWD, developed a guidance document to assist local YA coordinators, Technical College Tech Prep staff, Technical College Program Administrators, and Technical College Admissions staff with determination of local technical college articulated credit agreements for their YA programs.²⁴

²³ Youth Apprenticeship Home (September 2009), Department of Workforce Development

²⁴ Steps to LOCAL Work-Based Learning Connections: WTCS-YA Credit Articulation Recommendations, November 2010

This process can be utilized, as applicable, for any WBL program, including the State Certified Skills Standards Program described below. Local Technical College Articulation Agreements developed using this process in conjunction with the WTCS Credit for Prior Learning Policy should provide incentive for students from secondary to post-secondary education and recognize the value added credits that follow them from their WBL experiences.

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION SKILL STANDARDS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Wisconsin's Cooperative Education Skill Standards Certificate Program²⁵ provides junior and senior high school students with a unique experience to divide their time between classroom instruction and workplace learning. The workplace learning component for each participating student includes an introduction to all aspects of an industry, ensuring a broad perspective of the career opportunities for the student. The workplace opportunities also provide students exposure to the employability skills and technical competencies identified by the industry. The program also provides paid work experience to participating students.

Under the program, a teacher supervises this arrangement in one of the following areas: agriculture, business, family and consumer, marketing, or technology education. The student's job is matched with a career interest in one of these areas. The competencies and skill standards which students must achieve for certification are industry-based and approved by DPI. The competencies are measured on the job by the workplace mentor and in school by the teacher coordinator and other staff. The school must furnish classroom facilities, reference materials, teaching aids, workplace mentor training, and a teacher coordinator. Local business and industry establishments provide on-site work experiences for the students, collaboration time with a teacher coordinator, a workplace mentor, and an assessment of competencies.

A student involved in the program receives high school credit for the work experiences and the related school class and a certificate of proficiency in the technical area. The course(s) involved may also be eligible for dual college credit, depending on the local arrangement. Developing appropriate credit arrangements with post secondary institutions are encouraged to ensure a smooth transition from one level to another without experiencing delays, duplication of courses, or loss of credits.

V. EARLY AND MIDDLE COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS

Early College High Schools (ECHS) are designed so that low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education can simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree—tuition free. Since

²⁵ Cooperative Skill Standards Programs Introduction, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

2002, the partner organizations of the **Early College High School Initiative**, coordinated by Jobs for the Future with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have started or redesigned more than 230 schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia. Students graduate high school at a rate of 92 percent, and 40 percent graduate with at least a full year of free college credit. Eleven percent even graduate from high school with a diploma and an associate's degree. Several states, including North Carolina, Texas, New York, and California, have extensive networks of Early College High Schools.

Middle College High Schools are secondary schools with similar characteristics to Early Colleges, but do not have the same defined and structured "compression" program. Middle Colleges are authorized to grant diplomas in their own name, often located on college campuses across the nation. The Middle Colleges are small, with usually 100 or fewer students per grade level and they provide a rigorous academic curriculum within a supportive and nurturing environment to a student population that has been historically under-served and underrepresented in colleges. While at the Middle College, students have the opportunity to take some college classes at no cost to themselves. In recent years, the Middle College and Early College efforts are increasingly aligned. MCHS have been coordinated by the Middle College National Consortium for over 30 years.²⁷

Wisconsin has several early/middle college high school models, although the saturation of these models is not statewide and certainly not available to all students across the state. For example:

- College High School, Milwaukee Public Schools: Wisconsin's only formal "Early College High School", Loyola is operated by the Council for the Spanish Speaking, Inc., it is a Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Partnership School under contract with MPS to serve at-risk students. The school serves 100 students in grades 9 through 12 who meet the state's at-risk criteria. Parents of these students are also beneficiaries of other educational and social services offered by the Council. It was selected by the National Council of La Raza to receive funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to convert to an ECHS. The school has a five-year Memorandum of Understanding with the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) that will allow students to take courses for college credit starting in the 11th grade. To better support students and their families, Loyola Academy partners with UW-Milwaukee, Marquette University, Alverno College, the Urban Ecology Center, and several community-based organizations.
- LakeView Technology Academy, Kenosha Unified School District: Opened in 1997,
 LakeView Technology Academy is a specialty high school serving 375 students in grades
 9-12 who are focused on careers in engineering, automated manufacturing, information

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²⁶ Early College High School Initiative, www.earlycolleges.org

²⁷ www.mcnc.us

²⁸ Council for the Spanish Speaking, Inc.

technology, biomedicine, and aviation. LakeView students earn the equivalent of one year of technical college credits and/or one semester of college of engineering credits upon graduation. Students take on-site Gateway classes which allow them to earn 18-21 college credits, which can then be transferred to Gateway and several other colleges. LTA has the highest Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Exam (WKCE) scores of any public high school in the Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties. ²⁹

- o The Health Care Academy, Ladysmith-Hawkins School District: A public charter school, the Health Care Academy (HCA) works in partnership with Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College and Chippewa Valley Technical College to offer dual enrollment opportunities in many healthcare fields, including the Certified Nursing Assistant and Dental Assistant.³⁰ The program has strong links to the local business community, which provides a variety of supports to the future workforce educated at the academy. For example, while many courses and labs are held at the HCA campus, Rusk County Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home, Marshfield Dental Clinic Ladysmith Center and other local partners provide clinical training sites, in addition to student mentoring and guidance.³¹
- Tenor High School, Independent Charter School authorized through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Tenor High School is open to students living in the city of Milwaukee who have completed the eighth grade. According to the UW-M Office of Charter Schools, "Enrolled students experience a program that is focused on the exploration of professional careers, satisfaction of entry-level course requirements for enrollment at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), and completion of dual certification in the form of a Tenor High School diploma and a MATC certificate in a specific area of concentration." Tenor and MATC have established an Advisory Board composed of high level administrators from both entities to ensure a seamless transition from Tenor to MATC.

²⁹ http://lakeview.kusd.edu/

³⁰ Ladysmith High School Happenings: Ladysmith Health Care Academy, March 2010

³¹ Northern Wisconsin Initiatives to Attract, Recruit, and Retain Workforce

³² Tenor High School Summative Evaluation, UW-M Office of Charter Schools, 2009